THE TENTH MUSE

AND OTHER POEMS

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

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BY

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF YORK

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THE TENTH MUSE

THE TENTH MUSE

COMPOSED FOR A PRESS ANNIVERSARY

I.

In stately classic time
Who built the lofty rhyme—
While yet his hand wandered along the lyre,
While the loud prelude lingered,
And each quick string he fingered,
Not finding fitting outburst of his fire—
Then would he raise
First notes of prayer and praise
To those great daughters of Mnemosynë—
The high immortal Nine—
And, swift! the whispered line
Leapt to his lip,—commanding, sounding, free.

II.

Yet I, to-day,
Neither to praise nor pray,
Sweet Muses! with your sacred names begin
This, my unusual song;
But if ye still live, strong,
Somewhere on heights which poet's verse can reach;
If still with mortal eyes ye may be seen
By some new Hippocrene—
Some later, nearer Aganippë's fountain—
Then listen, and with sister-arms en-ring
Her whom we bring
Up the steep slope of your celestial mountain.

III.

Clio! whose tablets keep—
That Gods may laugh and weep—
Full record of men's wars and loves below;

Euterpe! with the pipe
Set to that rosebud ripe
Of thy Greek mouth, some lovely strain to blow;
Thalia! laughing as the stroller's task
Fits on the comic mask;
And sad Melpomene, with tragic eyes,
And drawn glaive's glittering blade;
Thou, too, Heav'n's pensive maid,
Star-crowned Urania! rapt in mysteries!

IV.

And thou, soft Erato!
From throat of snow
Murmuring a love-verse to the chorded shell;
And grave Calliopë,
Of epic scrolls to be
Deep-meditating how the strain shall swell;
Polymnia! cheek on hand
Pillowed, while slow and grand

The storming organs thunder chant and hymn;
    Terpsichorë! whose feet
    Shine whiter while they beat
The white wind-flowers by Helicon's green rim.

V.

    With bended brow and knee
    Here bring we, fair to see,
And grown to Grecian stateliness and grace,
    Her whom we serve alway
    By night, by day,
In diverse tongues and many a peopled place:
    Not grudging among men
    From toil of brain and pen,
The largest she shall ask us, nor the least,
    So praise come to her name,
    And power, and fame,
And North and South may hail her—West and East.

VI.

High Muses! be not slow
Her rights to know
Who comes to sit on the Pierian Hill,
Turning your Nine to Ten;
For—born, albeit, of men—
She, by her high emprise, is Goddess still.
The Tenth Muse treads to-day
This lofty way,
Not less than ye of Heav'n—divine no less;
Room! ye who proudly dwell
Here on the asphodel!
Your youngest sister greet, the modern PRESS.

VII.

Nay! start not, Erato!
Sweet music doth not flow
Freer for thee than her, when she bids sing;

And, Clio! look! she lacks
Neither thy stele, nor wax,
To write the tale of all things happening;
Euterpe! piping soft—
Thy chosen poets oft
Pour their melodious souls upon her page;
And, light Thalia! thou
Dimpling such mouth and brow,
Laugh'st side by side with her, on every stage.

VIII.

Melpomene! to thine
Her thoughts incline
Where, o'er the boards, the tragic players pass
When, in the mimic scene,
Warrior, and knight, and queen,
And woes, and wars, and fates their image glass;
Like thee, by night—by noon—
Of stars, and sun, and moon.

The changeful march, Urania! she doth mark;
With watchful gaze like thine
Muse most divine!
Our Lady's eyes shine brightest in the dark.

IX.

Calliopë! regard!
Epic and lyric bard
Take from her equal hand their laurel-crowns;
Those she delights to praise
Wear haughtily the bays,
Go famous in a thousand towers and towns.
Nor scorns our Mistress sweet
The tripping feet
Of such as worship glad Terpsichorë;
The choral song and dance,
And woven steps that glance,
And swimming limbs, her own gay business be.

X.

Then—debonair, demure,
In Vestal sindon pure—
With thine, Polymnia! all her mind grows Jove's;
In temples, still and dim,
She shares the mystic hymn;
And puts by wars and crimes and shows and loves.
Oh, make good place
For our proud Lady's face
In the undying circle of your beauty;
For see, ye stately Nine!
No art, nor charge divine,
No gift, nor grace there is, but falls into her duty.

XI.

Aye, Muses! more than this!
She whom your lips must kiss,
Your new-crowned Sister of this later day,

She you shall take—
For all the people's sake—
Into your high-born company; and say
"EPHEMERA! be free
Of heavenly airs, as we!"
This sleepless Lady whom her true scribes love—
A greater purpose holds,
A larger deed unfolds,
A mightier mandate bears from will of Jove.

XII.

So, if there do remain
Some little sable stain
On this white faithful hand, these fingers slender,
As beautiful as wine
Crims'ning a wrist divine,
Rosier than rose-leaf on the snow, more tender
Than tears on silken lid
Those ink-marks deem! Nay, bid

Our pale Queen welcome! think her worthy glory
Who—watchful, night by night—
For human help and light
Sits by her whirling wheels, spinning the wide world's story.

XIII.

The wide world's friend is she
With tireless eyes which see
Whatever anywhere befalls; with ears
Opened, by night, by day,
To what men do or say,
All the far echoes of all months and years.
And what she learns alone
Swiftly she maketh known
With voice majestic, world-extending, high;
So that the rolling sea
Hath not a tongue more free,
Nor more all-covering is the arching sky.

XIV.

Also her heart is set
On hopes, undreamed of yet
By those who worshipped once, old bards and sages;—
The onward march of Man
From what began
His uprise, to the goal of all the Ages.
The peoples of the plain
Your Gods did once disdain
From ledge of haught Olympus, 'mid their clouds,
For them our Mistress hath
Large pity; and hot wrath
'Gainst such as scorn and slight her patient crowds.

XV.

To minister to these
'Neath all the roaring seas,
Her messengers, tamed lightnings, come and go;

O'er all the busy lands
Her duteous eyes and hands
Gather up knowledge, that the people know.
From them she hath her power,
And hour by hour
To them she payeth back her debt of greatness,
Accomplishing full score
With blessings more and more,
And service wrought in silence and sedateness.

XVI.

And if, indeed, her hand
Wieldeth no fiery brand
To strike oppression down, stay the wrong-doer,
Chastise the wicked law,
And guilty plunder draw
From wealthy robbers, and be swift pursuer
Of crime and guile; alway,
To seize, and smite, and slay,

Muses! this plumèd quill which she doth bear
Is keener in the strife,
Strikes closer to the life,
Than sword of Themis, or Athenë's spear.

XVII.

Of this the subtle point
Pierceth each armour-joint
In rich rogues' pride, and evil men's contriving;
There stands no shame so strong
It shall, for long,
Make head against our Lady's ceaseless striving;
For, clad in living light,
'Gainst Darkness does she fight;
And girt with Knowledge, Ignorance she chases;
High Muses! welcome her—
Our World's Interpreter—
Glad and caressing to your heavenly Places.

XVIII.

So, in the sacred ranks,
For all men's love and thanks,
EPHEMERA, Tenth Muse, sits safe to-day,
Our Lady of the Lamp,
Whom we, of many a camp,
Serve daily—for her work's sake—and obey;
Not holding any grace or any gift
Too precious to uplift
In homage to her; deeming all her right;
Nor ever once ashamed
So we be named
Press-men; Slaves of the Lamp; Servants of Light.

THE PASSING OF MUHAMMAD

B

THE PASSING OF MUHAMMAD

PROPHET OF ARABIA

A Dramatic Sketch.

The scene is in the house of AYESHA, MUHAMMAD'S *favourite wife, at Medina; the date being the month of June,* A.D. 632. MUHAMMAD *is lying on his bed, sick unto death; his wives, with some other Arab women, attending him.*

AYESHA.

BY God! we never looked that he should lie
This way, like others; weak, and lean, and cold;
Moaning in mortal pain, whom we did know
The Prophet of the Lord.
Maimuna! drive
The green fly from his brow! Dost thou recall,
Thou, Salma's sister! what a brow it was,

How lordly, with its blue vein swollen big
When he was wroth, or unbelievers irked?
What eyes these sealed eyes were, so keen and stern,
That day, the eighth of Dzul Hijj, when we went
The pilgrimage to Mecca, we his wives,
And five score cattle for the sacrifice,
He in the front of all, by Bital led,
Riding Al Kaswa (that good beast which found
The desert-well, and knelt at Kaaba,
Dropped in the season when he wedded thee?)
Was it not like to locust-swarms?—the folk
Hung round Mohassir, and on Arafat,
Glad eager masses, while he stood aloft—
As 'twere the Angel of the Seal, methought—
In Mina, saying aloud: "I have fulfilled
The Message! I have left amidst ye here
A plain command, the Book of Allah! This
If ye hold fast, shall guide aright your feet."
And, lifting up his gaze, he spake aloud:
"See, Lord! I have delivered all Thy will;

Witness it for me!" Then what thunder rolled
From forty thousand scores of tongues which cried:
"Aye! Of a truth thou hast!" Did we not deem
He clomb too near to heav'n in those great hours
Ever to fall like this to us and death?
By Allah! have ye thought it could be so?

MAIMUNA.

Nay, and how bright with life this wan cheek was
When he came back from Mecca, all his heart
Full of God's peace; the seven due circuits done,
The Zemzem-water quaffed, and each thing set
In just ensample for the days to be
When all men wend to Mecca! Ayesha!
Thou wert on Arafat that dawn he spake
The sunrise prayer—and afterwards the verse
From his fifth Sura: "This day have I made
Truth finished for ye; this day have fulfilled
My mercy toward ye; this day do appoint

Islam your faith for ever." Oh, that night
I did not dare caress him when he passed
Into my tent; I let the date-water
Spill from my leathern-bowl, afeard to speak,
He was so rapt. I chafed his feet, and dropped
My eyes—ashamed of such far-seeing eyes.

ASMA (*sister to* MAIMUNA).

For me, I held him most majestical,
Surest of years, that day when Zeïd's son
Osâma, took command for Syria.
How, like a conqueror, did our Lord unroll
The banner of black wool, and bind the sword
Which flashed at Beder, on Osâma's thigh,
Saying: "Fight thou with this, under my flag,
In Allah's name for Allah's truth, and smite,
And break the unbelievers!" Then, indeed,
Who would have dreamed our Master nigh to death?

AYESHA.

Yet he fell sick next night. Oh, had we marked,
There lacked not signs. Fatma! bear'st thou in mind
How Abu Bekr met him two moons back
In the Mosque-gate, and, noting that his beard
Grizzled amid its flowing raven—spake
Full sorrowfully, in a sudden grief:
"Thou—who than father or than mother art
More dear to all—alack! I see grey hairs
Are hastening in upon thee!" and his eyes
Brimmed with quick tear-drops. For, the Prophet raised
With both thin hands his beard, gazing thereon,
And answered: "Yea! 'tis travail of the Word
Hath wrought deep signs upon me: night and day
The saying of the 'Suras Terrible,'
'Hud,' and 'The Striking,' and 'The Inevitable,'
Have burned my strength to ashes."

FATMA.

Yes! 'twas so;
Yet sought we ever what might bring him rest;
His uncle Abbas, seeing how the folk
Thronged round him in the Mosque, said, "If we build
A lofty seat for thee, they shall not throng."
But sweet reply our Lord gave: "Kinsman kind!
I will not cease from moving in their midst,
Dragging my abbas through the press of them,
My feet stained with their dust, till Allah's call
Bring me my time of peace."

AYESHA.

Ah, Fatma! moist
His lips with honey, for I think they move,
And, peradventure, 'twill be Allah's will
This weakness shall go by. Yet, latterly
Of times he did recite, as if 'twere due,

That Sura which doth say: "When God's help comes
And victory, and thou shalt see all tribes
Entering by troops the gateways of the Faith,
Then celebrate the praises of thy Lord,
And seek His mercy Who is merciful."

FATMA.

Aunt! When that same great Sura was writ down,
He called me; spake to me with quiet eyes,
"My daughter! it is opened I shall die."
At which hard word mine eyes broke into floods
Like rain on Yemen in the sowing time.
But he said softly: "Nay! Khadîja's child!
Weep not; be comforted; since, verily
Thou shalt join first with me in Paradise."
Thereat no more I wept, but in my heart
Joy gleamed like sun-breaks when the showers are done.

MAIMUNA.

Most happy Fatma! if it were to me
He had spoke so, this sorrow would not lie
Crushing my heart, as when her too great load
Keeps crooked the camel's knee. I, too, recall
How—when it was my night, and naught he loved
Soothed him, not date-cakes, nor the rabab's string,
Nor perfumes of the myrrh and ambergris,
Nor kisses—and ye women know he liked
Women and scents and sweets—he rose from me,
Wrapped his striped izar-cloth about his head,
And, lifting up the inner curtain, paced
Into the jewelled stillness of the night.
With fearful steps I dared to follow him.
Ah, Sisters! not to spy! solicitous
Lest wandering beast or sinful robber hurt
The Prophet of the Lord. But he came straight,
Quick-striding, resolute, to where our dead
Sleep by the city-wall. There, 'mid the tombs,

Long leaned he on his cedar-staff, intent,
Deep meditating, silent. At the end
A jackal barked; whereon, as if the cry
Roused him, I heard him, in right gentle tones,
Speak to the Dead: "Verily, ye and I
Have found fulfilment of what Allah pledged;
Blessèd are ye, and blessèd is your lot
Beyond the lot of those left in this world!
Sleep well, till God's great daybreak wakens you.
O Lord! show mercy to these slumberers,
And grant Thy grace to me!" At that he turned
And hastened back with such assurèd strides
Scarce I had space to outrun him, and to quench
The kindled lamp, and cast my sandals by,
And seem to slumber, when he crept again
Chilled to my side, and whispered, "This good night
Allah hath proffered me which thing I would—
Long life, or else to meet my Lord betimes;
And I have chosen very soon to die."

AYESHA.

That was the week my brows ached; and I moaned,
"Oh, head! my head!" not wotting he was nigh.
Then entered he, his own brows knit with pain
And lightly spake: "'Tis I might cry 'my head!'
So bitter is this heat that scorcheth me!
But thou, Omm Raman's child! were it not sweet—
If Allah willed—thou didst die first; so I
That loved thee best, might speak the prayers for thee
And wrap thee in thy grave-cloth, Ayesha!
And lay thee safe, till I came too, Gazelle?"
"Now God forbid!" quoth I, as who would turn
A heaviness to merriment, "thy wish,
I fear me, Prophet! is to find some eyes
Brighter than Ayesha's, when I am gone,
Giving the love that hath been mine to her."
But wistfully he smiled, and silent went.

MAIMUNA.

Yea! yea! we know he loved you best. You came
New to him from the goat's milk, and child-games.
But I, and Haphsa, Zeinab, and the rest
Dwelled in the outer garden of his love.
It was his wish: we grudge thee not; 'tis meet
He lie now in thy chamber, Ayesha!
Since—save Khadidja—thou in all these years
Held his heart most. But, oh! take heed to him,
He strives to speak!

[MUHAMMAD *awakens.*

MUHAMMAD.

Ayesha! Ayesha!
Hath yet Osâma marched?

AYESHA.

My Lord! sweet Lord!
He stands without, waiting to speak farewell.

MUHAMMAD.

Cover your faces then, and bid him come.

[OSÂMA *enters, and, kneeling by the couch, kisses the sick man's face.*

OSÂMA.

Prophet! how fierce a fever burneth thee!

MUHAMMAD.

I swear by Him in whose hand lies my life
There suffereth no Believer, but his woes
Cause sins to shed away, as the hot wind
Strips dead leaves off, that new green leaves may grow.
I, here consuming, cheat my fever's flame
Praising the Lord; but thou, why tarriest thou?
Smite me the Unbelievers! Fall at dawn
Upon those dogs of Obna! Let assault
Clamour first tidings of thee! Send forth scouts,

And Allah give thee victory! Guide my palm
That I may lay it on thy head, and leave
A blessing there. Go in God's peace!

[OSÂMA *departs.*

My girl!
Where is that gold I gave into thy hands?
Part it among the "people of the Bench,"
Heav'n's poor ones.

AYESHA.

Master! 'tis the last we have;
We owe for wood and sesamum.

MUHAMMAD.

Give! give!
That were ill-done if I should meet my Lord
With dinars in my hand. Maimuna! reach
My izar down. I hear the Muazzan
Calling to prayer! *Ya! ya! Ash 'had do an*
La illah 'l-lul-la-ho. Ye faithful! know

There is no God save God: *hya-ul-as-salaat!*
Wend unto prayer! [*A pause, while he tries to rise.*]
Nay, nay! I have not force!
I cannot stand! this fever burns my brain;
Lay me once more upon the camel-skin.

AYESHA.

Sweet Lord! thou doest ill to vex thy strength.
Enough is wrought. Ah, rest! Saith not the Book,
"We have forgiven to thee all thy sins,
The former and the latter."

MUHAMMAD.

Ayesha!
Except God's mercy cover me with grace,
I, that am called the Prophet of the Lord,
I shall not enter into Paradise.
Hath yet Osâma marched? It will not ease,
This fierce hot aching, till I hear his drums.
Ah! set the door wide back; I faint! I faint!

MAIMUNA.

Make wet his holy lips with date-water,
Zeinab! Fan quickly, Fatma! See, he swoons;
Our Master's eyes are shut. He hath desired
Too ardently to lead the evening prayer.

AYESHA.

'Twas Monday's Azan brought him to first point
Of mortal feebleness.

ZEINAB.

I did not know;
How fell that, Abu Bekr's daughter?

AYESHA.

Weak—
Though not, as now, to edge of death—he lay.
And I, who oft before, in time of strait,

Heard him ask Allah for deliverance,
Knelt heartsick by the bed, because he prayed,
Saying, "O Soul! my Soul! why seekest thou
Another refuge save in God alone?"
'Twas then that first he no more craved to live.

ZEINAB.

Inshallah!

AYESHA.

But the morn broke, rose and gold,
And the cool air was like a spring to drink,
While, in the ways, the footfalls of the folk
Made clatter, and the pigeons on the roof
Cooed, and the well-ropes creaked, awakening him.
So, stronger for his sleep, and—hearing then,
As now, the Muazzan—he would arise
And gird himself to go. My father served
Imâm that day, and told us what befell.

ZEINAB.

Impart it, Sister!

AYESHA.

All the Mosque was filled
To its corner flag-stones; and the first *rakaat*
Was finished; and the people stood to make
The second form; when our Lord entered in,
His arm about the neck of Abba's son.
Then, in the House of God, that weakness fled;
Glad grew his face; his wan lips warmed; he said
Softly to Fadhl, "Allah granteth me
Cooling of eyes by this good breath of prayer."
And the folk parted on the right and left
To make way for him to the Mimbar-rail,
Where Abu Bekr would have yielded place,
But our Lord motioned "no," and on the mats
Sate, till my father ended morning-prayer.
Then he arose, and while the eyes of men

Fed on his looks, and eager fingers caught
His robe's hem to fond lips—he cried aloud,
The fever crimson in his cheek, his mouth
Dry with the blast of Death, and this dear front
Shadowed with Azrael's over-hanging wing;
Aye!—Abu Bekr said—he gazed around
And spake: "Men of Medina, where I lived
Coming and going, testifying God,
I shall die soon. I pray ye answer me,
Is there among ye here one I have wronged?
I have borne rule, judging in Allah's name,
That am a man, and sinful; have I judged
Unrighteously or wrathfully, or pressed
Too hard in the amend? Let who saith 'yea'
Make his 'yea' good before the people here
And I will bare my back that he may smite.
I have borne testimony for the truth,
Not sparing sinners: speak, if there be one
Wronged by my hid misdoing; let him shame
His Prophet now, telling the ill I wrought

Before the Assembly. I have gathered dues,
Declare if I defrauded any here
Buying or selling."
And no answer came
Except the noise of sobs and weeping men,
Because our Lord spake thus.
But one arose,
A hamal, with his cord across his back
And porter's knot (Zeinab! thou knowest him,
'Tis Hassan, from the last shop in the lane
Behind the Mosque), who cried: "Abdullah's son,
Three silver pieces owest thou to me
For wood I bore thee after Ramadhan."
And softly said our Lord, "Good friend! much thanks
Because thou didst demand thy money now,
And not before the judgment-seat of God.
Ill is it if men thither carry debts."
Therewith he paid that debt, kissing the hand
Wherein the dirhams dropped; and so came home
To lay his head upon my lap; my lap.

But, Zeinab, look! Maimuna, look! our Lord
Stirreth anew! What saith he? let me come!
Ayesha's ear shall know—

[*Kneeling at the bedside.*

'Tis Ayesha

Hearkens, dear Master!

MUHAMMAD.

Give me drink, my girl!
Hath yet Osâma marched? Be those his drums?
I die—at last I die! breathe on my eyes
And chafe my hands. Well know I that I die.
Listen! this for thine ear—for thee alone—

[*He whispers.*

Three days agone Allah's high messenger
Came to me—Gabriel—and he asked of me,
"Servant of God! how is it with thee here?"
"Trouble is with me, and sore agony,"
Replied I. Then he spake, "A little while
Have patience;" and departed. Once again

With selfsame speech he came, enquired; and I
With the same words made answer. And again
Even now, whilst ye did watch, th' Archangel stood
Here, in thy room,—another shining one
Behind him,—and he said, "Servant of God!
This is the Lord of Death, dread Azrael,
He hath not sought before from any man
Leave to come in, and never afterwards
Shall seek from any—but to-day he stands
Waiting thy pleasure; suffer that he come."
Then spake I, "Enter, Allah's Messenger!"
And Azrael said: "Muhammad, I am sent
To take thy soul, if so thou wilt; or else,
If so thou wilt, to leave thee whole again.
I that command, am at command of thee."
Whereon a little pondering I was 'ware
Of Gabriel's whisper: "Verily, our Lord
Desireth thee." And thereupon I spake,
"Do thou the will of Allah, Azrael!"

[*A pause.*

ZEINAB.

What saith he, Ayesha?

AYESHA.

Be still, be still!
O Prophet of the Lord! O Master, stay.

MUHAMMAD.

No! take thy lips away—they cannot help!
Speak, if thou canst, my Sura writ for death:—
Kiss me no more, I say; Azrael's mouth
Is on my lips. O Allah! pardon me!
Join me with the companionship on high!
Hist! I see Paradise! Ah, Gabriel! lend
Thy hand a little more. I testify
There is no God but God!

[*He dies.*

THE PASSING OF MUHAMMAD

AYESHA.

Now, women, cry!

Gone! our resource, our glory! *Wel-wel-eh!*

Our Lord is dead and gone! *A-lal-lal-lai!*

ON THE

DEATH OF LORD TENNYSON

No "moaning of the bar!" * Sail forth, strong Ship!
Into that gloom which has God's face for far light;
Not dirge, but proud farewell, from each fond lip;
And praise—abounding praise; and fame's faint star-
light

Lamping thy tuneful soul to that large noon
Where thou shalt quire with angels. Words of woe
Are for the unfulfilled—not thee, whose moon
Of genius sinks full-orbed, glorious, aglow.

* Compare Lord Tennyson's late poem :—
"And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea."

ON THE DEATH OF LORD TENNYSON

No "moaning of the bar!" Musical drifting
Of Time's waves, turning to the Eternal Sea;
Death's soft wind all thy gallant canvas lifting,
And Christ thy Pilot to the Peace to be.

October 6, 1892.

WRITTEN IN THE BIRTHDAY BOOK OF

H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF YORK

(THEN PRINCESS VICTORIA MARY OF TECK)

THE Princess bids me write! what happy wit
Were fair enough this fair page to befit?
In Gulistan there lived a nightingale
Who, in 'mid singing, felt his music fail,
And said: "To Roses I make melody,
But, Rose of Roses! I am dumb for thee!"
So, England's Rose! that which our true hearts pray,
Let Silence, with her golden speaking, say.

June 1893.

CRATHIE CHURCH

WRITTEN FOR THE ROYAL BAZAAR AT BALMORAL

(*At desire of* H.R.H. THE PRINCESS BEATRICE)

FAR back in memory's vistas—far!
I mind a day when, to Braemar
From Ballater, by winding Dee,
Two college-comrades walked with me.
We tramped by bridge, and birk, and cairn;
Looked down Glen Muick and wild Glen Gairn;
Passed Craigendarroch's hanging glade,
Nor at grey Abergeldie stayed;
Till, on the right,—ere you espy
Balmoral's turrets break the sky—
There rose, 'mid rowan-trees and birch,

CRATHIE CHURCH

The plain front of a parish church,
So lowly, featureless, and mean,
That when one said, "'Tis where the Queen
Goes to her prayers," the other cried,
"That Crathie? on yon mountain side
Of Lochnagar, purple and blue,
A stately shrine should soar to view
Fitter for kneeling Majesty!
You lassie! Can this really be
Our Queen's church?"—
To a Highland maid
So he put question; and she said:
"It's Crathie Kirk! the door's nae steek'd,
Gang in, and when ye weel have keeked
For the Queen's pew—gin ye sall look,
Ye'll see her cushion and her book!"

So those pass in. But I—less bold,
Or more contemplative—withhold
My soiled shoes from that sacred floor,

Waiting beside the open door.
Whereat the lassie, wondering, says:
"Wull you na' see where the Queen prays?"

I called her near and took her hand,
And said: "How shall you understand,
My little maid, what makes me wait
Content, apart, outside this gate?
Yet, listen! In the Indian land
Where many a splendid mosque doth stand,
One, I remember, white as snow,
Supremely reared, above, below,
With domes which in the blue air rise
Like rounded clouds; and rich device
Of plinth and frieze; and minarets
Piercing the sky; and diamond jets
Of fountains; and a sweeping flight
Of stairs laid broad with lazulite
And jasper slabs, leading the feet
To where, beneath the porch, 'tis meet

Men put aside their slippers. There,
Written upon the marble clear,
In Persian letters, one might read
IHTIRÁM,—word for 'Take thou heed!'

"'What made them write it?'
I will say:—
'Twas there that Akbar came to pray;
Akbar the Great, in Agra King,
Lord of the East, all-conquering.
One day his stately head he bent
Within that marble mosque, intent
The names of Allah to intone,—
Ninety and nine—for each, one stone
Upon his turquoise rosary;
And next, upon his face, to be
Suppliant of Heaven for grace and peace
On India, and his Realm's increase;
With happy issue of that war
His Moslem Omrahs waged afar.

Then, while the wise Prince prayed, there came
One of his captains, like a flame
Of gold and jewels, from the field
Bringing great news. The foe did yield;
The mighty forts had fall'n; the towns
Opened, with spoil of thrones and crowns;
So, loud he cried: 'Show me the King!
Since goodly tidings do I bring.'
And to the nail his Arab tied,
Taking the steps at one great stride.

"But the blind porter at the gate
Crossed his palm-staff, and murmured: 'Wait!
Whate'er thy news! Akbar is met
Inside with Allah! weightier yet
Than any words of man can be,
Or noise of earthly victory,
Is what the King speaks in this place
For him and us, and what the grace
Of Heaven may answer. Take not thou

Taint of thy worldly doings now
Into such presence.'

"So that Lord
Unbuckled shield, and helm, and sword,
And sate, awaiting, meek. And there
Upon the marble—clear and fair
In silver script—they did inlay
'IHTIRÁM,' and that word doth say:—
'Here halted, out of modesty,
The herald, e'en of victory.'"

Her blue eyes opened all their blue:
But still, I think, she partly knew
Why I, one of those English three,
The Church of Crathie did not see.

11th June 1894.

THE STORY OF THE SNAKE

BEING THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

(*Translated from the Sanskrit of the* MAHÂBHÂRATA)

The following translation from the Sanskrit of what has never yet been placed before Western eyes, opens one of the most curious and striking passages of the many which are to be met with in that alternately wonderful and monstrous "Mahâbhârata," the chief epic poem of India, out of the heart whereof, like gold from a prodigious mountain, I myself have many a time carried away poetic spoil. The passage occurs in the beginning of the Anushâsana Parva, the thirteenth book of this vast epic, and treats upon the eternal problem opened by "those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell." Whence is it that we suffer? Why is it that we inflict upon each other, or upon ourselves, unnumbered woes, sometimes willingly, sometimes involuntarily? What is the origin, after all, of evil? An answer is given from the Vedantic period to such questions in this remarkable section of the Anushâsana, which must be

ancient, and may be far older than Christianity. The character of the Sanskrit text hereabouts is certainly not to be distinguished from portions clearly authentic, known to be written more than two thousand years ago, and in any case the passage deserves to be made known to Western thinkers, if only for its strange dramatic metaphysics.

After commencing with the usual invocation to Narayan and Nara, and to the goddess Saraswati, the book opens with a speech from the Prince Yudhisthira, addressing the hero Bhishma, who is lying wounded to death upon a bed of arrow-points, vanquished in war by Yudhisthira himself, the most virtuous and the most valiant of the Pandavas. The Prince, great in mind and good of heart, is grieved at the sight of his suffering enemy. He reproaches himself bitterly for having brought about the downfall of so renowned a warrior. In his distress and remorse, he wishes that he himself had fallen upon the field along with the vanquished. It is characteristic of this interminable Hindoo poem that immensely long episodes are introduced at moments when modern poetic art would demand swift and continuous action, or succession of events. Bhishma, dying on his hard battle bed, has already discoursed upon various topics at enormous length. Yet when Prince Yudhisthira implores some spiritual comfort so that his perturbed soul may recover itself from deep remorse and be cleansed from what the Prince thinks is sin, Bhishma proceeds to relate to him the apologue here transcribed, freely but faithfully, from the Sanskrit text.

THE STORY OF THE SNAKE

BHISHMA.

Why, happy Prince! wilt thou so deem thy soul
Cause of its actions, seeing that thy soul
Is instrument, not cause? That this stands true
Sense cannot learn, being too deep a thing,
Too imperceptible. Yet, on such head
Hear thou a bygone story of the talk
Held between Mrityu and Gautami,
And Kâla, and the Fowler, and the Snake.
Know, Kunti's son! the lady Gautami
Was of a governed and a tranquil mind:
One day she saw her only son fall dead
Bit by a serpent, which a fowler seized—
By name Arjunako—and bound that worm
With knotted string, and brought to Gautami,
Saying, "This cursèd snake hath been the means
Of thy son's death, most noble lady! Speak;
Say swiftly how the wretch should be destroyed.
Were't better that I fling it in the flames,

Or hack it into gobbets. Of a truth
This base destroyer of thy child must die."

GAUTAMI.

Arjunako! Thou understandest ill;
Set free the serpent. Thee it hath not wronged,
But only me. And who will dare contemn
The unshunnèd law that measures harm for harm,
Sinking their souls to darkness by sin's load?
Look! like a ship that bravely breasts the wave,
They that sail light by casting sins away
Cross o'er the ocean of existence safe;
But they that take for cargo evil deeds,
Go to the bottom, as its iron head
Drags down a spear in water. Killing this
Will not bring back my boy; letting it live
Doth thee and me no harm. Why should we earn
Death for ourselves, dooming the snake to death?

THE FOWLER.

Great lady! I have seen high-minded ones
Knowing all truths, like thee, thus tender-souled
Unto the meanest things that grieve. Such words
Howbeit, suit best for those whose hearts are calm,
Not for an angered man. I'll kill this snake.
Let mild souls, if they may, write all debts down
To Fate or Chance; but plain men right themselves
By making foemen pay. What dream is here
That we miss heaven by hurting such as hurt?
See now, 'twill comfort thee if I stamp out
The reptile's life.

GAUTAMI.

If thou wert of my mood,
'Twould move thee otherwise. A good man's thought
Meditates virtue always. This my child

Was, woe is me! predestined unto death;
Therefore I will not have thee slay the snake.
Anger is poison; poison hurts. Good friend!
Forgive as I forgive! Let the wretch go!

THE FOWLER.

Nay! nay! I say, by slaying him we earn
Merit hereafter, great and measureless,
Even as a man doth well and gaineth praise
By sacrifices on the altar. Praise
Is won, slaughtering a foe. Bid me to kill,
And that shall bring us both credit and peace.

GAUTAMI.

What comfort is there if we rack and slay
An enemy? And what good were not lost
By not releasing where we can release?

Thou bear'st a goodly presence. Be thyself!
Pardon this snake with me, and earn desert.

THE FOWLER.

One snake bites many a man. Let us protect
The many from this one, preferring them.
The righteous make the evil meet their doom,
Now, therefore, bid me slay him.

GAUTAMI.

Killing him,
O Fowler! gives not life back to my son,
Nor any other fruit save bitterness.
Therefore, thou Man of Blood, let this beast go!

THE FOWLER.

By killing Vritra, Devarâj made gain,
And dread Mahâdev won his sacrifice.

Do thou, like them, straightway destroy this worm
Without misgivings.

"None the more for this,"
Spake Bhishma, "did the high-souled lady bend
Her spirit to the sinful deed. Thereon
The serpent, by the cord painfully bound,
Hard-breathing, and sore-striving to be calm,
Uttered these words, as men and women talk,
Slowly and sorrowful."

THE SNAKE.

Arjunako!
What fault is mine in this, thou foolish one?
No wit have I, nor of myself do act.
'Twas Mrityu sent me hither. By Death's word
I bit this child, and not from choice of mine;
So, Fowler, if sin be, the sin is Death's.

THE STORY OF THE SNAKE

THE FOWLER.

If thou hast done this evil, set thereto
By mandate of another, 'tis thy sin,
Being the instrument. The potter moulds
His pot of clay, but in that deed is helped
By wheel and stick, which also of that pot
Were causes. Thus art thou, Serpent, a cause.
Who slays must die. Thou didst slay! 'Twas thy
word.
So will I slay thee.

THE SNAKE.

But the potter's wheel,
And stick, and all his gear, made not that pot;
Only obeyed in making; helpless means—
As I was helpless. Therefore, mighty Sir!
No fault is mine in this, as thou should'st own.
If otherwise thou deemest, then at worst
Those were but causes working under cause,

The greatest being the first. And, reckoned so,
How am I guilty in this deed of death?
Cause primary is guilty, if guilt be.
Let potter speak for wheel!

THE FOWLER.

If not the head,
Thou wert the hand in this: thine the fell fang
That nipped this tender life. So thou shalt die!
What, Serpent! think'st thou, when a wrong is done,
The evil doer of the evil deed
Stands not to pay therein? Prepare to die!
Making no better plea.

THE SNAKE.

My plea is good;
Cause and effect have interholding links:

I was but agent. If thou wilt see just,
The sinfulness of this rests not on me
But on the one that sent me.

THE FOWLER.

Wretched worm!
Not meet to live. Thou glozing chatterer! why
List I so long? Prepare to die. 'Twas vile
Biting this little one.

THE SNAKE.

The priests, great Lord,
Who offer sacrifices do not win
The merit or demerit. So then I
Ought not to bear what was high Mrityu's deed.

"At this," said Bhishma, "being named by name,
Appeared red Mrityu's self, with noose, and eyes
Of terror, and in this wise did she speak."

MRITYU.

Serpent! thy words are true. I sent thee here,
And thou art not the cause of this child's death.
Nor I, that bade thee slay. Th' Omnipotent,
He was the cause, God Kâla. As the wind
Drives the weak clouds whither it will, so I
Hither and thither pass, by Kâla blown.
All that is *Sattwa, Râjas, Tamas;* all
Which influences, which predominates,
Which operates in creatures, have for source
The will of Kâla. All this Universe
Thrills to His will. All thoughts, and acts, and words,
And what doth spring from them, are Kâla's work.

The water, and the wind, sky, fire, and earth;
Surya and Soma, Vishnu, Devarâj,
Vritra, Parjanya; all the streams, and seas,
Aditi, and the Vasus; what exists,
Or did exist, or will, are Kâla's deed.
Why, therefore, Serpent! dost thou blame me here?
If fault attach to me, to thee as well
Fault would attach.

THE SNAKE.

I do not blame thee, Death!
Nor call thee blameless. This alone I say,
That what I did I did of thee. If sin
May lie on mighty Kâla, or not lie,
How shall a serpent see, how can it know?
As I am innocent it liketh me
Death, too, is innocent. But, Fowler! thou
Hast heard the words of Mrityu: loose me then,
It is not meet to vex a guiltless one,
Tying him with this cord.

THE FOWLER.

Aye! I have heard
Thee and thy Mrityu, yet I deem thee not
Any more guiltless. Thou and Death wert cause;
And cruel Death, who brings kind eyes to tears,
I cannot force to suffer. Thee I can,
And thee now will I slay for guiltiness.

MRITYU.

Thou wilt be sinful, Fowler! he and I
Worked no will of our own: Kâla is Lord,
And all that's done is done by Kâla's will.
Neither the snake nor I deserve from thee
These bitter words!

But Bhishma said, "Hereon,
Look! Kâla entered, God of Gods; and took
Speech as of man; and spoke to Mrityu,
Arjunako the Fowler, and the Snake."

KÂLA.

Not Death, nor this vile reptile, nor Myself
Stand guilty anywhere at any time
Of any creature's dying. They and I—
Yea! even I—are all but go-betweens.
Arjunako! thou Fowler! comprehend!
The Karma of this child did kill this child,
No other cause was there that brought its end;
Of Karma he did die. That which he wrought
In many lives ere this, led hereunto
Implicitly. What he had wrought before
Made this, and nothing else, the outcoming
Of what was done; nor otherwise the Snake

Thereto was led by Karma, and by that
Mrityu; yea, I Myself. For will makes deeds,
And deeds make Karma, and the Karma makes
The outcoming. As when ye press the clay
This way and that, and see it harden, so
Men for themselves shape Fate. Shadow and light
Are not more surely tied each unto each
Than man to Karma, and to Karma, man;
Therefore perceive and ponder! Therefore know
Not I, nor Mrityu, nor the Snake, nor she,
The Brahman mother, brought this death about;
The child did bring it: 'twas his doing, his,
Fixed from the flowing past, inevitable.

Then Bhishma finished, saying: "Thus the God
And Mrityu, and the Snake, loosed from his cord,
And Gautami, consoled in heart and mind,
Went, with Arjunako the Fowler, home.
And thou, too, puissant King! hearing this tale,

Forget all grief, and reach to peace of mind;
For Heaven and Hell and all things come to all
By Karma. What has fall'n upon me here
Is not thy doing, nor Duryodhana's;
It was to be, because of what hath been."

SOHNI

A TALE OF INDUS

Dub mûi—"Dead of drowning"—is the legend on the stone,
Standing grey, beneath the thorn-tree, by the river's brim, alone;
With a woman's name carved—"SOHNI"—and, below, cut, round and well,
Just a common water chatty! Know you what it means, Patel? *

Yes! he knows—the village knows it! all those rags a-flutter see
On the branches, and those votive shards piled round the bâbul-tree.

* Head of the village.

None passes Sohni's death-place, but ties, for pious fear,
Strips from his cloth or girdle, or casts a pebble there.

For lovelier—so he tells us—all Indus' bank beside
Than Sohni, the Jât maiden, no maiden might be spied;
The cypress not so slim and straight, the musk-deer not so light
As Sohni with the milk-pots bringing home the goats at night.

He says—this village ancient—that for love and joy to see
Her dark eyes shining jewel-like, and footsteps passing free,
And to hear the bangles tattling pleasant music round her feet,
They changed her name of Sohni, to "Jungle-Honey Sweet."

But ever by the river, growing up so fair and fine—
Daughter, besides, of Damadar, who owned a score of kine—
The great ones did desire her; and Sohni's youth and grace
Were sought by Govind, soucar,* of evil soul and face.

And all because that soucar held half the village bound
With debts at heavy usury, men trembled if he frowned;
So Sohni must be Govind's wife, the next new moon but three;
Yet Sohni—milking, singing—wist not that this would be.

Her mind was with her Indian boy, beyond the yellow stream,

* Soucar: a native money-lender.

SOHNI

Who played the bansulî * so sweet he might God
Krishna seem,
So had he piped her heart away, and when the moon
grew dim
Sohni would swim the Indus, to find her heart, and
him.

To sit, before 'twas sunrise, under the peepal-tree
And listen to his songs of love upon the bansulî,
And make him better music yet, with sighs and whis-
pered words,
Till time came they must sunder, and drive afield their
herds.

Then Sohni, with a last embrace, bound underneath
her breasts
The round black chatty, stopped with grass, whereon
the fisher rests

* Bansulî: Hindoo flute.

What time he spreads his river-nets; and, so, stemming the tide,
Came back upon the chatty safe once more to her side.

Then to the cover of the reeds the friendly jar she drew,
And lightly tripped a-milking, till love's star gleamed anew;
Full many a glad and secret night, when Luximan did blow,
Sohni swam o'er the Indus, to meet her lover so.

But once it fell that Govind—too early gone abroad—
Saw Sohni with her chatty, breasting the watery road—
A lotus-blossom drifting! Ah! Govind's angry eyes
Marked; and his evil spirit an ill deed did devise.

From out its place of keeping fair Sohni's jar he drags,
And hides another like it amidst the reeds and flags.

Oh! trick of cruel cunning! 'tis a pot of unbaked clay,
Will soften in the water-flood and swiftly melt away.

And, when again the month grew dark, Luximan's bansulî
Sounds; and fond Sohni hears it, and hastens to her tree;
There clasps the traitorous chatty, and plunges from the brink,
But—half across—feels fatally the false clay yield and sink.

A little while, for love and life, her brown hands beat the wave;
But broad and strong runs Indus, and none is near to save:
Down in the dark swift river, her slender limbs are drawn—
The soucar and the jackals hear that dying scream! At dawn

Yonder—upon the sandy spit—lies Sohni, stiff and cold,
The water-grasses tangled round the heart that was so bold;
DUB MÛI—"drowned;" and so we set her death-stone by her tree
Cursing the soucar Govind, who wrought such villainy.

MY GUESTS

GALLANT and gay, in their doublets of grey
All at a flash—like the dartings of flame,—
Chattering Arabic, African, Indian—
Certain of springtime, my swallows came!

Doublets of grey silk, and surcoats of purple,
And ruffs of russet round each white throat,
Garmented brave they had crossed the waters,
Mariners sailing with never a boat!

Sailing a sea than the bluest deep bluer,
Vaster to traverse than any which rolls
'Neath kelson of warship, or bilge of trader,
Betwixt the brinks of the frozen Poles;

MY GUESTS

Cleaving the clouds with their moon-edged pinions
High over city and vineyard and mart;
April to pilot them—May tripping after;
And each bird's compass his small stout heart.

Meet it seemed such rovers to welcome,
Travellers lordly, and bold, and wise;
I doffed my hat on that golden morning
To the first of their band who met my eyes;

Saying, "*Al sabah al khaireh*, Swallow!
If you're from Egypt, of Nile what news?"
"*Chitra! chitra!*" he cheeped, quick flying;
"'Tis Hindi, then, that your worship would use,"—

"*Ap ki mihrban*'"—but he would not listen,
Scouring the daisies in headlong flight;
You'd want some breakfast, too, if you travelled
From Ebro to Thames in a single night!

Still I think that he held me civil,
For he came again; and my foreign friend,
Glossy, and plump, and familiar, and loving,
A fair she-swallow did then attend.

Ah! of the air what an Atalanta!
How should we fare if our mistresses flew
A mile in an eye-wink to mock a lover;
With bright Hippomenes chasing, too!

Yet all in good time they roved together,
Paired like a doubled lightning-flash,
Birds of one heart and one mind and one feather;—
Lastly, she sate on my window-sash,

Lord! such a Lady-Bird! eyes so shining,
Feet so dainty, and mien so proud!
Judging her Spanish—some small Señora—
"*La casa e sua!*" I said, and bowed.

Yes! and forthwith at my word she took me;
Made a home of my house; surveyed
A sheltered nook in the porch; and entered
Into possession. There, unafraid,

Day after day her nest she moulded,
Building, with magic—and love—and mud—
A grey cup, made by a thousand journeys,
And the tiny beak was the trowel and hod.

Then,—no more chatter, and no more twitter
Till Silence and Night saw the cup contain
Four pearls—Love's treasures! 'tis "eggs" men call
them,
Yet, if we would ponder a miracle plain,

Think on the speed, and the strength, and the glory,
The wings to be, and the jubilant life,
Shut in those exquisite secrets she brooded,
My Guest's small consort, the swallow's wife!

Nay, and no southern Lazzarone,
No lazy desert-bred Beddawee,
Was her glossy husband! five hundred forays
'Twixt morning and evening accomplished he,

Hawking the gnats, and raiding the midges,
And darting home from his dipping bath
With meat in his mouth for the wife and children;
A Lord more gentle no Lady hath!

A Lady more faithful no Lord could boast of;
But the full pride came when, above the nest,
Peeped four little birdlings, in purple and russet,
And the gleam of as many a white satin breast.

"*A los niños que duermen,*" I sang, in her Spanish,
"*Dios los bendice!*" She flirted away
The better to show me her jewel-eyed darlings
Along the edge of the cup of clay.

Now, dawn after dawn, there are painstaking lessons
To teach sky-science, and wing's delight;
Soon will they follow the swift feet of Summer;
Oh! Señor Swallow! I envy your flight!

Ah! Golondrina! I grieve you are going!
Say greetings for me to my East so dear!
You have paid your rent with your silvery cheepings,
"*La casa e sua!*" Come back next year!

POEMS OF JAPAN

A JAPANESE LOVER

Now, glory and honour be given
  To the Lords of the Sea and the Land!
From deep unto deep was I driven,
  I was driven from strait unto strand;
But, at *Kaki-no-hana-no-hashi*
  To-night there is ending of pain;
At the "Persimmon-Bridge,"—*mezurashii!* *
  I shall see her again!

By the pipe-shops, and buyers belated
  Fly fast, *Kurumaya-san!* †
Go mendo! ‡ 'twere blame if she waited
  By so much as one flirt of her fan.

* Wonderful! † Rickshaw-man. ‡ "Honourable fault."

I am come to her half the world over,
  And half the *Ken* * over she came:
And we laugh at a faint-hearted lover
  Who is lover in name.

Kochi, kochi! † the bridge stands before us,
  Set me down, and take three times thy pay!
By the light that *O T'ski San* ‡ sheds o'er us,
  I mark her trip quickly this way.
My Pearl of the dark-running River!
  My Tama! bright, tender, and true,
Met together once more—and for ever—
  You and I! I and you!

* Province. † Here, here! ‡ The moon.

SOME JAPANESE "UTA"

A MOTHER'S EPITAPH ON HER DEAD BOY AGED NINE YEARS

[By the Poetess Komachi]

Tombo-tsuri, &c.

No. 1.

My Chaser of the dragon-flies at play,
O Son! my Son!
I wonder where the little feet to-day
Have run—have run?

THE SADNESS OF LOVELINESS

[By Ariwara Navihira]

Kononaka ni, &c.

No. 2.

What's beautiful
  We cannot choose
But pine to keep,
  And ache to lose.
If buds to blooms did never grow,
  Or never faded,
What anxious longings were let go,
  What lack evaded!

PRAISE OF KIYÔTÔ IN SPRING

[By Sosei Hotshi.]

Miwataseba, &c.

No. 3.

Where'er I glance
  Pale leaves I see
Of willows dance
  With cherry-tree:
Green, silver, pink
  Richly arrayed:
Thou wear'st—I think—
  Spring's new brocade!

PLUM-TREES IN A SPRING-STORM

[By Kakinomoto Hitomaru]

Ume no hana soretomo, &c.

No. 4.

Which be buds of the plum-trees,
  And which be stars of the snow—
When flakes fall thick on the blossoms—
  How,—sweetheart! how shall we know?
Are you jealous of Earth, white Heaven!
That you shower down your cloud-petals so?

THE VANITY OF BEAUTY

[By the Poetess Onono Komachi]

Hana no irowa, &c.

No. 5.

Just for a three days' dulness,
  Just for one pelt of the rain,
It is faded,—the flush of my spring-time!
  I shall not see it again.
Oh, rose-red blooms of the cherry,
  Did you come for pleasure, or pain?

A QUESTION

[By N. Amenomori]

Masurao no, &c.

No. 6.

Moon of the autumn sky!
  Sentinel, silver and still!
Where are our dear ones who die?
  Is it well? is it ill?

THE MOUNTAIN CHERRY

[By Yukochi Mitsune]

Idzukutomo, &c.

No. 7.

Spring's lovely light
Basks rosy-bright
O'er all the land,
Yet white with snow
Miyoshino
Doth stately stand!

THE FAITHFUL FLOWERS

[By Ki Tsurayuki]

Hitowa, izu, &c.

No. 8.

From hearts of friends the sweet of love hath passed,
  I know not why, or when:
But you—fair faithful Blossoms! to the last
  Keep fragrance—now, as then.

SPRING RAIN

[By Onakatoni Yoshinobu]

Wagayadono, &c.

No. 9.

Look! on my garden-hedge, this glittering morning,
  What miracle is seen!
The Spring-rain, by its magic of adorning,
  Hath dyed the grey fence green.

MIGRATING WILDFOWL

[By Tsumori Kunimoto]

Usugamini, &c.

No. 10.

Writ in pale ink
  Across the grey scroll of the clouded sky,
A message from the South Land to the North,
  I see the wild geese fly.

WILD FOWL

[By the Poetess Koto Naishi]

Karigane ni, &c.

No. 11.

Had I the wild bird's wing
It should not beat the wind
To leave so far behind
Miyoshino, white with snow-flowers of Spring.

THE LAST OF SPRING

[By Minamoto Tomotada]

Hanadani mo, &c.

No. 12.

If cherry-boughs spread rosy still
When Spring-time was departing;
I should not feel—beyond my will,
These wild regrets upstarting.

SEPARATION

[AUTHOR UNKNOWN]

Kimi ni wakarete, &c.

No. 13.

THAT day when we did sunder,
Roaming the pine-trees under,
Was it the dew did soak your sleeve,
Or tears?—or tears, I wonder!

THE FAITHFUL WIFE

[AUTHOR UNKNOWN]

Omae to ishio, &c.

No. 14.

If thou wert only always with me, Dear!
The woodland wild and drear,
The lowly hut, this daily labouring,—
To ply the needle, turn the winding wheel,
Beat the wet cloths beside the stream, and bring
Grass from the mountain brow;—I should not feel
That these were toils, but joys;—if only, Dear!
Thou wert for ever near.

THE TIMID LOVER

[By Sumo no Naishi]

Haru no yo no, &c.

No. 15.

I LOVE you so
I dare not let you know!
    For if—even in a dream—
As brief as is spring night,
    I did but seem
To make your breasts a pillow of delight,
Oh, afterwards, what blame
    Upon your name!

AT THE MEETING-PLACE

[By Sosei Hoshi]

Ima kundo, &c.

No. 16.

I MUST think now
Thou didst most falsely vow
  O Maid! too much delayed!
It is the "long-moon Night,"
Yet see! how pale and white
    Against the blue of morning she doth fade!
Thou comest not;—'tis plain;
Alas! I love in vain.

A FRENCHMAN TO THE SEA

A FRENCHMAN TO THE SEA

[FROM THE VERSES OF M. HECTOR SOMBRE.]

Called "Poèmes Sinceres."

A THOUSAND million curses! 'tis pitiful to see
In all our foolish ages so many bards should rise
To chaunt the barren splendour of thy billows, cold and foul,
Thou dull, ferocious Ocean! that makest mortals wise
Blaming the blundering Providence created such as thee.

Yea! poets after poets have tuned their loudest strings
To shameful harmony with what thy murderous music moans:

From Roman Virgil down to now, there is no minstrel seen
  Who hath not, in thy gulfs of green, found infinite fair tones
Gilt by the dying day; thou Grave of Man's endeavourings!

Aye! thou vile treacherous Curse of earth! thou crawling sexless sea!
  They hymn and twangle to thee for a sacred element;
Whereas, along thy glimmering face, which cheating tints embroid,
  Death stalks, at devilish business, in sombre storm-clouds pent,
Laughing to spy how many lie, whelmed in thy cruelty.

But I, who know thee nearly, and thy false heart, cold and vain,
  And what for this ill glory hath been man's bitter pay,

A FRENCHMAN TO THE SEA

When I behold the setting sun go weary to his rest,
  Plunging his heavy golden ball into thy hissing spray,
I say, "It is a bowl of blood the blood-sucker doth drain!"

Thy ripplings and thy murmurings!—Ah, *Gueuse!* we understand!
  The harlots lisp and whisper in every land like this:—
But yon strong rock which must abide the lying sea's caress,
  He knows it is a Beast that licks, to swallow, not to kiss;
Or, if a kiss,—Iscariot's, with the silver in his hand.

Green rolls thy surge, and green, they say, is hue of hope and faith:
  Yet deeper gaze! mark how the greys and yellows underlie!

See what an inner glare is there; fierce, full of subtleness,
Know ye not where is met the like? 'tis in the wild beast's eye
When gaunt he prowls at even-time, his glance alight with death.

Bah! wooing, wheedling summer Seas! white cats of Neptune's plain!
That purr your crafty *ron-rons;* and come, and go, and come,
Arching such hypocritic backs, as if ye joyed to have
The ships and mariners so brave upon your bounding foam;
We know you, hungry-bellied tibs! pinched with an empty pain!

Some feign that in those whitening crests fancy may bring to mind
Flocks of sea-sheep that graze thy fields, while shepherd-winds do blow;

But I have watched thy foam-wreaths, and what they mean I see,
Pale rended frocks of sailor-folk, dragged to the ooze below,
White locks of ancient skippers, grey corpses drifting blind.

What! praise thee for thy vastness huge? dub thee the "mighty" Main?
Ah, Traitress! let them ask of thee how many seamen sped
Helped fill thee up? how many tears, by wives and mothers poured,
Aided to heap salt fathoms over those precious dead?
Vast Sea! 'twas weeping made thee vast! man's loss hath been thy gain.

And last, "*La Mer!!*" One foolish day some Gaul did style thee "*Mère,*"
Thinking thee truly "Mother"; seeing thee smooth and suave

But thou didst wash the sweet word off, with brine of
scornful surge,
And—lest the worst of human dams blush for that
name he gave—
He dropped its soft end-letter: thy brand of shame is
there!

Hear ye not that sound, in the air,
Like the wail of some despair,
Like the shriek of one they wrong?
'Tis *La Gueuse*, the lecherous Main!
Mad for men, she wants again
Wrecks to swallow: that's her song!

Ugh! the monstrous female creature,
Camel-backed, and foul of feature,
Well she knows our lads to charm!

Those she lures to her green caverns
Go to death as to their taverns;
None feel horror or alarm.

See, too, how her breast obscene
Specked with sea-sweat, grey and green,
Heaves in wrigglings scandalous!
'Tis because to-night her lust
For our blue-eyed fishers, must
Snatch a dozen more from us.

Ah, poor souls! what ill decree,
What undreamed-of destiny
Lured ye to such evil plight?
Wherefore, doomed so soon to die,
Did your foolish hearts rely
On a God "Who doeth right"?

'Tis because by cunning snare,
Worse than mortal murders are,
She her lovers doth enfold;

'Tis because she lets them drag
Hard bread from her bowels—Hag!—
Bought with agonies untold.

They have started, our sea-boys, to keep the pots boiling,
A dozen true hearts, on the brine to go toiling;
They know with *La Gueuse* 'tis not matter for laughter,
But the babes must have victuals, whatever come after;
And, when in the cottage these wail for a crust,
Let the waves howl their loudest, go fishing they must;
So, they launch to the deep in their poor fragile boat,
Which seems like a bird's nest—no bigger!—to float

For the brutal horse-play of those billows, a toy!
But the good gallant fellows their vigour employ,
And at first the shrewd vixen, all dimple and leer,
Smiles around the full meal, which will make her fine
cheer;
Then, the crave for men's lives overcoming her soul,
Leaping up to the darkness her black billows roll,
And a vision of horror it grows, to behold
Those martyrs of duty, sires thirty years old,
Stripped, ravaged, and slain by this element suave
Which Monsieur Lamartine for "mistress" would have.
No! never fell lion sent forth such a cry
By night, in the desert, alone, to the sky,
As that horrible, murderous, howl of the Main;
And never a hydrophobe, raging with pain,
Such ghastly sounds uttered; no mad hurricane,
The blindest, and loudest, and worst which could be
Ever showed itself savage and wild as that Sea!
Nor elsewhere so cruelly pushed is the law
Which dooms our poor manhood to peril and awe,

As there, by those waves, which no skill can subdue:
Ah, ah! shout your loudest, you hapless ones, you!
The gulf will not care for your mournful appeal:
See, see now! 'tis finished! the surges conceal
The souls they have slaughtered, with green shroud out-spread
In silence for ever deep over our dead!
And 'tis this; 'tis the judgment that heareth no plea,
'Tis the brutal, unheeding, self-will of the Sea,
Which, for certain, must shock the kind eyes of the stars;
That scream of the drowning Night's splendour which mars,
That fate always ready, wherever seas spread,
For the fisher whose sole sin is toiling for bread.
Aye, Academicians! what ye laud so well
It is this scena infernal, this picture of hell,
This hateful *chef-d'œuvre* of Nature, infect,
Accursèd, unslaked; which your poet elect,

Your "Hugo," your "Victor," from Guernsey's safe
height,
In exquisite triplets, all tuned to delight,
With his hand on the lyre, and his babies asleep,
Hath acclaimed as "God's mightiest marvel, the Deep"

I swear that I know not a lie more immense!

Oh! yes, and her holiday lying pretence!

Well I know how, with the day,
When her food is hid away,
She, *La Gueuse*, not hungry now,
Clears the terrors from her brow.

And I know, upon the sands
How *mesdames*, in laughing bands,
Not much troubled as to dress,
Hunt for shells in wantonness.

How the famous artists come,
Some alone, with ladies some,
Wield a yard-long brush; and soon
Paint *la mer* for the saloon.

Yes, and how the households go
With their girls and boys a-row,
Pile the pebbles, delve the beach,
Spade and bucket, each to each.

Maids in gala garbs there be
Glad to trifle with the Sea,
Pleased to show their tender flesh
In her breakers, sharp and fresh.

Yet I, alas! despite those tricks and guiles,
The sea-beach games, the children's happy smiles,
Never forget those widows standing by
That, waiting vainly for their dead ones, cry:

A FRENCHMAN TO THE SEA

"Aye! dip into the waves your shapely toes,
Mesdames! who smell of jasmine and of rose,
Who take sea-kisses from the fawning sea,
And know it not a Murderess, as we;
We—unto whom our absent 'twill not give,
Whose dead men are as many as do live;
We, too, to this vile Sea our breasts have bared
To shame her that she slew the sons they reared."

FROM THE PERSIAN

THE FOUR FIRST GHAZALS OF HAFIZ

GHAZAL I.

Alá yá! send the Cup round! O Sáki! brim and send;
Love, which at first was easy, grows harder at the end;

For ache of what the Breeze brought from that musk-scented brow,
Those purple tangled tresses, hearts' blood is dropping now.

Well! dye the prayer-mat darker with wine, then; as 'tis bid;
Such solace of Love's stages from Magians is not hid;

But this stage, Best-Belovèd! is too long! when the bell
Calls to unpack the camels, by God! it will be well.

The Black Night, and the fearful Wave, and whirlpool wild of Fate;—
Oh, lightly-burdened ones ashore! what reck ye of our state?

Wending mine own way, unto woe and ill-fame I was brought;
How, in the loud Assemblies, could such high lore be taught?

. . . . . .

If thou wilt find The Presence, Hafiz! why, seek it so!
This world or the Belovèd, choose one, and let one go!

GHAZAL II.

Oh, glory of full-mooned fairness! and lustre of lighted grace!
Beauty sleeps deep in thy dimple, and, hid in thy chin-pit, Grace.

Then only my heart shall know quiet, bright brows! and tresses in riot!
Then—Well-Belov'd!—when its longings win forth to the peace of thy place.

My soul, risen up to my lip, stands eager to see thee, and go;
Backward and forward it flitteth; it fluttereth toward thee, and fro.

What is thy pleasure? ah, say! . . . "Hafiz! hard is the way;
Keep thy skirt from the dust! many have finished in woe."

Yet would my heavy heart hear what th' Heart-subduer intends;
Oh, by my soul I swear—I swear by your souls, sweet friends!

No help's in this watching of ours! Buy, quick as ye may, red wine;
Buy from the happy drunkards for whom sleep maketh amends.

In the comfort of wine's warm slumber the swoon-bound spirit may wake,
Some dew from a secret lip, some light from an eye-beam take;

GHAZAL II

Lips! eyes! with a breeze from the Blest, let come rich scent of her breast,
I shall breathe 't, and be glad, as the dust is glad for the rose's sake.

Ho ye that do quaff the bowls at banquet of Jam! drink on!
With empty cups to your full cups we pledge; we will fill them anon!

To those who to God are dear—to Yazd, wind! these words bear!
May the heads of the loveless be balls for their horse-bats, every one!

From the place of Propinquity far, we languish; but Love hath his wings;
The slaves of your Lord we are, singing praise to the King of all Kings.

FROM THE PERSIAN

Sultan of Kings! High Star! send down love-rays
from far,
And I Heaven's threshold will kiss, as the earth-edge
the zenith en-rings.

. . . . . .

Hafiz utters his prayer;
Listen, and *Amin* say!
"Give him his daily bread
From the sugar-sweet lips alway!"

GHAZAL III.

SÁKI! dye the cup's rim deeper with the crimson of the wine;
Minstrel! sing of love, and tell us things desirable, divine.

In the gold I saw reflected plain my Well-Beloved's face!
Ye, that are not ever drunken! Senseless! Void of joy and grace!

Those your pale ones, those your prim ones, poor of stature, give delight
Only till my Cypress showeth, till my Moon swims into sight.

Never dies the heart enkindled from this flame of Love divine:
On the tablets of the Ages writ eternally is mine.

In the day of the Uprising not more profit will be got
From permitted bread of Shaikh, than our unlawful drink, I wot.

Breeze! if by that bed of rose-leaves, where the Well-Belovèd lies,
Thou dost sigh, take heed to whisper these my passion-laden cries.

Why let slip a living lover's name from memory, passing by,
Since too quickly falls forgetting when the day comes that we die.

GHAZAL III

To the Heart-Entangler's seeing this my drunkenness shows well,
Freely therefore wine they gave me—those high Lords of Heaven and Hell.

Quaffing Hadji Kívâm's wine-cup, there I saw, by grace of him,
In the green sea of the Night the new Moon, like a shallop, swim.

Ah, my heart is like a tulip, closing up in time of cold;
When, at length, shy Bird of Fortune! shall my snare thy wings enfold?

. . . . . .

Bird of Fortune! Bird of Favour! spread the net, oh, Hafiz!—spread!
It may chance her wandering pinions to the lure shall yet be led.

GHAZAL IV.

SUFÎ, hither gaze! for brightly shines the Mirror of the Cup;
Gaze into the ruby wine, and see what thing it flingeth up.

No one ever noosed the Anka—God's Bird—throw away thy snare!
All its mesh can ever catch thee, in this world, is empty air.

Cleave to pleasures of the Present! Adam, judging otherwise,
Lost his altered House of Peace; the lovely lawns of Paradise.

At Time's table, quick to vanish, quaff a cup, ere thou must go;
Ask not what He will not give thee, leave to always banquet so.

Foolish, niggard Heart! Youth's flitted, and thou didst not pluck one Rose
From Life's red bush! What's remaining? name and fame at life's dull close?

Yet, except from drunkards, fuddled with God's glorious Wine, none learns
What was veiled: the bigot Zahid nothing of himself discerns.

Unto us will come the wages—us who never left His Gate;
Lord! Thy slaves lie at Thy threshold: have Thou pity on their state!

WHY THE POET IS OF GOOD CHEER

(FROM GHAZAL 477 OF HAFIZ)

Letter Wau.

THE new Moon's silver sickle, and the Night's star-fields I saw;
And, for my own life's reaping-time, fell on my spirit awe.

"Awake, awake, good Genius!" I cried; "look, here's the sun!"
"Woe's me!"—"Nay!" spake he sweetly: "the deeds which thou hast done

"Are done. Have thou no terrors! Say, 'Settle all accounts,
Earth! with this corpse I leave thee, while my glad spirit mounts.'

"Say, 'Sky! boast not thy starry pomp! we who God's Sufis be,
Sell moonbeams at a barleycorn, and the Pleiades for three!'"

ROSES FROM S'ADI'S "ROSE-GARDEN"

(THE GULISTAN)

THE WORLD

THIS World, my Brother, will abide for none,
Set heart on Him that made the World alone;
Fix no reliance here, plan no repose,
Who lived are dead, and thou shalt be as those:
'Tis one,—when towards Departure souls draw nigh—
To sit on thrones, or on bare earth to lie.

GREATNESS

MANY a Lord hath been shovelled away
Leaving no trace on his lands to-day;
The proud old carcases under the stones—
The grave hath eaten their last little bones;

But the name of Nushîrvan, from year to year,
Lives for his largesses, happy and dear;
O King! do good! fetch profit from breath!
Before they say: "'Tis thine hour of death!"

LEAN BUT LEARNED

CAME it to your ears to hear
What the gaunt philosopher
One day, in his wisdom, said
To a proud, fat, pudding-head?
"Friend!" quoth he, "an Arab steed,
Though he should be lean indeed,
By his quality surpasses
All a stableful of asses!"

ROSES FROM S'ADI'S "ROSE-GARDEN"

A LEADER

I AM not he, in the battle
  Of whom they shall see the back:
Look for me where the blood
  Runs red, and the dust rolls black;
Leaders that fly from the field
  With the lives of their men wage war,
Stake your souls on the fight,
  Ye, who the chieftains are!

CONTENTMENT

TEN darweeshes upon one mat sleep well,
But in one kingdom two kings cannot dwell.

THE SAME

THE man of God with half a loaf to munch
To fellow-beggars gives the other hunch;
But if a King a whole dominion seizes,
Till he gains such another nothing pleases.

BEGINNINGS

A TREE that to-day its first twig shoots
The hand of a little one lightly uproots,
But if, for a season, ye shall delay,
Oxen and cords will not drag it away:
With a straw ye can stop the springs, which drown
The lordly elephants lower down.

INCONGRUITIES

SOIL and shadow may be suited, but the wrong seed
will not grow;
On a rock, in hopes they'll stay there, nuts and
almonds do not throw!

LOST LABOURS

IF the Water of Life were to rain
The willows would bear us no plums;
On the worthless bestow not your pain,
From the marsh-mallow no sugar comes.

OBSCURE ENEMIES

WHAT Zal once said to Rustum dost thou know?
"Think none contemptible who is thy foe!
At fountain-head the rillet trickles small
Which lower, drowns the camel, load and all."

DISCRIMINATION

A GOOD blade out of worthless steel did never any make,
Ay, Hakeem! waste no patience for a wicked person's sake;
The rain that in its gracious fall for all doth favour show
Brings tulips forth in gardens, but sets poison-weeds to grow.

FROM THE FIFTH "GATEWAY" OF THE "GULISTAN"

AT COURT

He who with favour by Kings is named
For the faults he shows he shall never be shamed;
And he that is thrust from the princely grace
There is none to praise him in all the place.

FAMILIARITY

A Lord with slave of fairy-face commenced in sport
and laughter,
What marvel if the Lord grew slave, and slave was
Master, after?

FROM THE FIFTH "GATEWAY"

Best speeds the servant bearing pots, or piling high
the bricks;
When such an one is o'er-endeared like a fed ass he
kicks.

HOPELESS LOVE

My hand from my Beloved's skirt I cannot take
away,
Though with a sword she smite me sharp, and, in her
anger, slay:
I have no place of sheltering, no refuge half so
sweet;
If I should fly 'twould only be to creep back to her
feet.

FROM THE FIFTH "GATEWAY"

BEAUTY

THE Lords of War do slay their foes by might of
brawn and bone,
But fair ones kill their lovers by loveliness alone.

WILFULNESS

IN vain physicians mingle bitter drinks
While the sick stomach still of sugar thinks.

FROM THE FIFTH "GATEWAY"

THE TEST

As long as nothing rash or mad thou doest for love
of me,
No lover, sir! art thou of mine, and I am nought
to thee!

A DIFFERENCE

ILL-LOOKING people you may roughly handle
When they shall come between you and the candle,
But, if it be a smiling, sweet-lipped Miss,
Put out the lamp, and catch her sleeve, and kiss.

FROM THE FIFTH "GATEWAY"

THE PASSION OF THE SOUL

HAPPY those eyes that, every dawn, can see
A face so fair! Who's drunk with wine may be
Sober by midnight: but who this way slakes
His thirst, is drunk till Judgment-Morning breaks.

A JAPANESE SOLDIER

Extract translated from letter of an officer in Marshal Yamagata's Corean Army: "I send you the enclosed true account of the death of Shirakami Genjiro, a young soldier, who was the first man killed at our battle of Sông-hwan, &c."

SHIRAKAMI Genjiro,
  Bugler in the Line!
You shall let our Westerns know
  Why the kiku* shine;
Why the Sun-flag, gleaming
  Bright from field to field,
Drives the Dragon, screaming,
  Makes the Pig-tails yield.

* The chrysanthemum-flowers, emblems of Japan. The *Hi-no-maru*, a Red Sun on a white ground, is the standard of Japan, and the Dragon, on a yellow ground, of China.

A JAPANESE SOLDIER

Shirakami Genjiro
  (Okayama man)
Left his ripening rice, to go
  Fighting for Japan;
Musket on his shoulder,
  Bugle on his breast,
Unto each beholder
  Linesman, like the rest.

Sad for grey-haired husbandman,
  Fatherly—in years—
Sad for pretty Yoshi San,
  Proudly checking tears;
No one in the village,
  Only Genjiro,
Careless of the tillage,
  Glad to ship, and go.

But the Emperor doth proclaim
  Soldiers must come forth!
Is there not despite and shame
  To Nippon, in the North?
Good at target-practice,
  Or bugle-calls to blow,
Duty bids! the fact is
  Genjiro must go.

Ah, poor boy! his home-place
  Never fairer seemed;
Never, out of Yoshi's face
  Softer sunshine beamed;
Yet his country calls him,
  Dai-Nippon hath need;
Whatsoe'er befalls him
  Genjiro will speed.

Traversed is the ocean,
  Reached Corea's strand;
War's accurst commotion
  Rages o'er the land;
But he knows his Nation
  Watching at his back,
While he blows to station,
  Blows for bivouac.

If 'twere only given
  Genjiro might do
By some grace of Heaven
  Something brave and new.
Pleasing his General, perchance;—
  Aa! 'tis never so!
A bugler nameless must advance,
  And blow, and blow, and blow.

So blew and marched the Japan boy,
  Still bearing in his breast
Deep loyalty for inmost joy,
  Duty for food and rest;
Since, none be born so lowly
  In that sweet Eastern land
Who love not Nippon wholly
  Or fear for her to stand.

The battle-morning frowned,
  The Sun-flags fluttered out;
By Sông-hwan, on Corean ground
  Gathered the Chinese rout:
Then Genjiro, the peasant,
  Fearless, virgin of war,
Saw the good sight and pleasant
  Of foemen stretching far.

He stood against the General's side
  The brazen bugle clasped;
The Leader glancing far and wide
  His sabre-handle grasped:
Then drew—and, smiling, said
  "Blow up the *Susumê!*
Louder than ever thy music played,
  Sound me the charge this day."

And Genjiro, rejoicing,
  Sets bugle-lip to lips;—
But, at the first loud voicing,
  A bitter bullet slips
From forth a powder-cloud,
  And, plunging in his breast,
Stains—striking sharp and loud—
  Baldric and cord and vest.

Oh, red it runs, the small stream
  Will drain away his life!
Kindly the Leader's accents seem,
  But 'tis the nick of strife:
"Let some hand from him take it
  And blow my onset clear;
One minute lost will make it
  A loss to cost us dear!"

"Nay, nay!"—eyes black with pride—
  Cries wounded Genjiro,
"I was to sound, and none beside!
  And surely I will blow!
This little thing, and last
  I may do for Japan!"
And forth, with might, he blew his blast,
  Already a dead man.

He blew the charge so loud,
  It blared across the plain;
It rattled, large and proud,
  From mountain unto main:
He blew so clear and soft,
  The Pig-tails made to fly
Before the Sun-flags, borne aloft,
  Could reach their enemy.

And, while he blew, the boy's blood
  Fell, scarlet drop by drop,
The bugle's mouth—and his—imbrued,
  Nor from the wound would stop
The trickling, trickling! Stoutly
  He sounded *Susumé*,
The call that bids our infantry
  Close in the deadly fray.

A JAPANESE SOLDIER

To tune of that brave clamour
  The Sông-hwan wall was won:
The fierce charge sped, the foemen fled,
  The day's great work stood done.
But when they turned, victorious,
  There! on the crimsoned ground,
Clasping his bugle, glorious,
  Young Genjiro was found.

THE END

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